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REMARKS

Claims 1-24 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, and 14 are amended to further specify that the barrier web consists only of continuous fibers that are optionally coated with a hydrophobic material. Basis for the optional component is found in original claim 10, as well as at page 16, lines 10-13 and page 17, lines 9-17. No new matter is added.

Entry of the amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 is respectfully requested, as it (1) narrows the claims, (2) raises no new issues, and (3) places the claims into condition for allowance. Alternatively, entry of the amendment is requested to place the claims into better form for consideration on appeal.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)/103(a) over Zucker

Claims 1-4, 7-9, 13, 14, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)/103(a) as anticipated by or obvious over Zucker (U.S. Published Application No. 2003/0129909). Applicants traverse this basis for rejection and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

Applicants reiterate their comments in traverse of the rejection over Zucker, as presented in their response of 25 July 2005. In short, Zucker discloses the manufacture of nano-denier continuous filaments, without providing an enabling disclosure as how to do so. Instead, Zucker relies on Fabbicante et al., incorporated by reference in Zucker, as disclosing a method for making such filaments. Accordingly, analysis of Fabbicante et al. is also necessary.

Likewise, Applicants reiterate their comments in distinction over Fabbicante et al., as previously submitted.

At page 7 of the final Office Action, first paragraph, the Examiner points out that Fabbicante et al. disclose an example comprising a mixture of continuous and discontinuous fibers having diameters of 0.5 microns (column 9, Table 4, lines 36-46). This example is no longer relevant to the claims as amended, which are directed to barrier webs consisting of only continuous fibers with an optional hydrophobic coating.

The Examiner continues by stating:

Fabbicante et al. only mention the fibers are discontinuous when the fiber diameter falls to 0.1 microns (column 2, lines 50-51).

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's interpretation of the language of Fabbicante et al. is unduly limiting. Fabbicante et al. state:

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Further, it is also possible to create discontinuous fibers as fine as 0.1 microns by using converging-diverging supersonic nozzles. (Emphasis added).

It is clear from the actual language of Fabbriante et al. that by use of their supersonic nozzles, the lowest diameter of discontinuous fiber is 0.1 micron, not the onset of making discontinuous fibers. Thus, the skilled artisan would understand that the Fabbriante et al. supersonic blowing method causes formation of discontinuous fibers, and that the diameters of those fibers range from 0.1 to 2 microns (col. 3, lines 58-64). Fabbriante et al. never discloses or suggests a manner of making webs of only continuous fibers that have hydrostatic heads as high as 145 cm (claims 1 and 14), and fiber diameters of less than 2 microns (claim 2).

Accordingly, it is clear that the method and apparatus of Fabbriante et al. is not useful to make sub-micron diameter continuous fibers, and therefore Zucker does not contain an enabling disclosure as to such sub-micron or 'nano-denier' continuous fibers. As such, Zucker cannot be said to provide those of skill in the art with an enabling disclosure as to how to make sub-micron diameter continuous polymeric fibers, and therefore cannot be deemed to make obvious the present claims. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested on this basis.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Zucker

Claims 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Zucker. Applicants traverse this basis for rejection and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

As stated above, Zucker is fatally defective as it does not adequately enable those skilled in the art to make barrier webs consisting of sub-micron diameter continuous polymeric fibers, and therefore cannot be deemed to make obvious the present claims. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested on this basis.

**Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Zucker
in view of Fabbriante et al.**

Claims 5 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Zucker in view of Fabbriante et al. Applicants traverse this basis for rejection and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

As clearly set forth above, neither of Zucker or Fabbriante et al. would enable those of skill in the art to make barrier webs consisting of sub-micron diameter

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continuous polymeric fibers, and therefore cannot be deemed to make obvious the present claims. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested on this basis.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Zucker
in view of Benson et al.

Claims 10 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Zucker in view of Benson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,746,517). Applicants traverse this basis for rejection and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

As clearly set forth above, Zucker fails to enable those of skill in the art to make barrier webs consisting of sub-micron diameter continuous polymeric fibers, and therefore, even in combination with Benson et al., cannot be deemed to make obvious the present claims. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested on this basis.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Zucker
in view of Healey

Claims 10 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Zucker in view of Healey (U.S. Patent No. 6,554,881). Applicants traverse this basis for rejection and respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

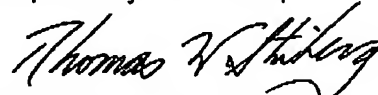
As clearly set forth above, Zucker fails to enable those of skill in the art to make barrier webs consisting of sub-micron diameter continuous polymeric fibers, and therefore, even in combination with Healey, cannot be deemed to make obvious the present claims. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested on this basis.

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In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-referenced application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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